

Haff, lead the Seneca Valley Raiders to the WPIAL Championship game, where they defeated the Mount Lebanon Lady Blue Devils. The Lady Raiders ended the season with an impressive 18-1 record.

I am happy to see such spirit, dedication, and teamwork flourishing in the congressional district that I represent. I wish the members of 2004 Seneca Girl's Volleyball team continued success.

I am proud to have such talented young athletes in the 4th Congressional District of Pennsylvania, and I ask that all of my colleagues in the House of Representatives join with me in recognizing their great achievement.

DISASTER ON THE HORIZON

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 25, 2005

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I cannot begin to guess how many times throughout my years of service in this institution I have heard my colleagues stand on this floor and pay homage to America's workers. I could probably paper these walls a dozen times over with the copies of speeches delivered here that have praised American working families for their contributions to our economy and our culture.

Patriotism, fairness, loyalty, a belief in hard work—these are just some of the qualities I have heard so accurately ascribed to America's working families. They are certainly traits deserving of public admiration. But I believe that they are also qualities that deserve to be preserved and maintained by Congress, because these are the threads that form the fabric of American life.

Today, the quality of life and the core values of America's working families are under siege, again, and the work of Congress faces unraveling. In particular, I raise the matter of a court decision last fall that knocked loose a core underpinning of the Coal Act.

In horrendous decisions, a federal judge thumbed his nose at Congress, and its work to ensure that the federal promise to America's miners would be kept. In a wrong-headed decision, that court placed in jeopardy the health care of thousands of elderly and ill retired miners and their spouses. The case involved Horizon Natural Resources—the nation's fourth largest coal company—which had gone to court to seek a way out of its obligations to its workers.

This was not so much a matter of a company whose tills were empty and whose assets were gone. It was, more precisely, a matter of a company that wanted the books to look better for prospective buyers who could scoop of the existing mines and processing facilities free of the weight of Coal Act obligations.

So Horizon went to court and asked a judge to let it use bankruptcy loopholes to circumvent its legal duties to its workers under the Coal Act. The company, quite plainly, wanted a seal of approval to turn its back on the men and women who had devoted their lives to it. Then, in September, almost inconceivably, the judge gave Horizon the final nod.

It was OK, it was ruled, for an American company to so devalue the American worker and to go around the intent of Congress. Horizon could merely dump its obligations, and go along its merry way.

It is not just the workers of Horizon who will suffer. In turn, the cost of the benefits legally owed by Horizon have been thrown onto already financially strained benefits plans. Consequently, Horizon and the courts, have sent a shock wave that jeopardizes the health care benefits of thousands of other retirees and beneficiaries. The weight of those obligations cannot long be managed in the current scenario. And if other companies follow suit, collapse will only be hastened. The need for a fix is urgent.

I have, therefore, joined with Senator ROCKEFELLER in introducing legislation intended to address this court decision. My bill will make it clear that the benefits and obligations mandated by the Congress through the Coal Act cannot be modified by the bankruptcy courts. It will, as well, prevent additional companies from trying to circumvent the Coal Act through bankruptcy, while leaving others, who play by the rules, holding the bag.

I am all too familiar with the struggles of working men and women in our country. I have always believed that a fair day's labor deserves a fair day's wages. I believe, too, that a company has certain obligations to a faithful worker who has devoted his life to laboring for the good of the company. It has been here, in the halls of Congress, where these beliefs have found refuge in the form of legislation, such as the Coal Act. The bill I introduce today reaffirms a federal promise made to America's coal miners and helps to fulfill the duty of Congress to America's working families.

HONORING THE CHIEF CLERK OF THE MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, EDWARD A. BURDICK

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 25, 2005

Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a loyal public servant and a nationally renowned parliamentary expert, Edward A. Burdick. On January 10th, 2005, Minnesota paid tribute to Mr. Burdick, Chief Clerk of the Minnesota House of Representatives, upon his retirement after nearly four decades of service.

After beginning work in the Minnesota House as a page in 1941, Mr. Burdick became the second full-time employee in House history when he took the job of desk clerk in 1955. At the age of 83, he leaves the position of Chief Clerk where he oversaw House operations with 250 full-time employees. He served through six changes in majority, alongside 12 speakers and more than 700 representatives. Throughout his tenure, Mr. Burdick worked tirelessly to ensure that the needs of Minnesota's Representatives were met.

Mr. Burdick has set a national standard as an expert, impartial parliamentary mediator

and administrator of House operations. As a former Member of the Minnesota House, I was privileged to work with him and witnessed firsthand how he commands utmost respect and credibility through his selfless commitment to the institution. He taught me the Rules of the House, and the most important rule—that debate is about policy not personality. His faithful stewardship of the rules ensured that all voices could be heard.

Mr. Burdick is among the most highly respected and honored individuals living in our State. He is the only living Minnesotan whose bust stands in the Capitol, where it is located outside the entrance to the House chambers. Mr. Burdick has been a vital part of the daily life of the Capitol, helping drive the business of the Minnesota House of Representatives since 1967.

Few public servants have such a distinguished and lengthy record of service. Mr. Speaker, it is a true honor to thank Ed for his years of service and wish him a happy and healthy retirement.

RECOGNIZING FLASH GORDON QUARRY

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 25, 2005

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Flash Gordon Quarry for his 35 years of committed service to AMTRAN. His knowledge and experience have made the transportation organization the efficient machine that it is today.

Flash began his journey through AMTRAN as an operator 35 years ago. He quickly proved himself as a capable worker and quietly earned recognition for his incomparable performance on the job. Mr. Quarry's distinguishing loyalty was acknowledged as he became a Director of Transportation in only 10 years. Working tirelessly to overcome the obstacles of having to learn and master continually changing technology, Flash flourished in his position as Director and for his continually professional performance he was awarded the very first Superstar of Transportation award in 1999.

Mr. Quarry's spirit and dedication to AMTRAN remains unparalleled. To the enjoyment of his family, friends, and coworkers, Flash has proven to be reliable and dependable time and time again. He willingly shoulders every major responsibility and handles the most difficult problems with patience and ease. Amongst all of his demands at work however, Flash always finds time to spend with his family, teaching his children and grandchildren to be exemplary citizens.

In the 35 years that Mr. Quarry has had a significant hand in the operations, AMTRAN has become a more efficient organization, making a strong impact on the Altoona area. He has demonstrated an unyielding enthusiasm and care for the organization which he has served. For his incomparable generosity, service to AMTRAN, and unabated commitment to excellence, Flash Gordon Quarry deserves the highest recognition. He has built a